

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1       1. A method for dynamically grouping clients in a  
2 system, comprising:

3                 storing data indicative of membership in a first  
4 group at a client;

5                 transmitting a group membership file including  
6 information indicative of client memberships in two or more  
7 groups at a system host; and

8                 updating the data indicative of membership in the  
9 first group at the client in response to receiving the  
10 group membership file.

1       2. The method of claim 1, wherein the data  
2 indicative of membership in the first group comprises a  
3 first group identifier.

1       3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

2                 creating the first group including two or more  
3 member clients, a member client having a client identifier;  
4                 assigning the first group identifier to the first  
5 group; and

6                 associating the client identifiers of the member  
7 clients with the first group identifier in the group  
8 membership file.

1           4. The method of claim 3, wherein the each member  
2 client satisfies a criterion.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the criterion  
comprises client profile information.

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1           6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2                 transmitting a message including a payload and a  
3 second group identifier;  
4                 receiving the message at the client; and  
5                 extracting the payload from the message in  
6 response to the first client identifier matching the second  
7 client identifier.

1           7. An article comprising:

2                 a machine-readable medium which stores machine-

3 executable instructions, the instructions causing a machine

4 to:

5                 store data indicative of membership in a first

6 group at a client;

7                 transmit a group membership file including

8 information indicative of client memberships in two or more

9 groups at a system host; and

10 update the data indicative of membership in the  
11 first group at the client in response to receiving the  
12 group membership file.

1 8. The article of claim 7, wherein the data  
2 indicative of membership in the first group comprises a  
3 first group identifier.

1 9. The article of claim 8, further comprising  
2 instructions causing the machine to:

3 create the first group including two or more  
4 member clients, a member client having a client identifier;  
5 assign the first group identifier to the first  
6 group; and

7 associate the client identifiers of the member  
8 clients with the first group identifier in the group  
9 membership file.

1 10. The article of claim 9, wherein the criterion  
2 comprises client profile information.

1 11. The article of claim 10, wherein the criterion  
2 comprises client profile information.

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1       12. The article of claim 7, further comprising  
2 instructions causing the machine to:

3                 transmit a message including a payload and a  
4 second group identifier;  
5                 receive the message at the client; and  
6                 extract the payload from the message in response  
7 to the first client identifier matching the second client  
8 identifier.

1       13. An apparatus comprising:

2                 a memory operative to store an apparatus  
3 identifier;  
4                 a receiver operative to receive a group  
5 membership file in a first transmission, said file  
6 including a group identifier and two or more associated  
7 member identifiers; and  
8                 a receiver controller operative to store the  
9 group identifier in the memory in response to said  
10 apparatus identifier matching one of said member  
11 identifiers.

1       14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the group  
2 membership file comprises two or more group identifiers, a  
3 group identifier associated with two or more member  
4 identifiers.

1       15. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the receiver  
2 controller is operative to identify each group identifier  
3 associated with a member identifier that matches the  
4 apparatus identifier, and to update the memory to include  
5 such identified group identifiers.

1       16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said updating  
2 comprises removing a stored group identifier in response to  
3 said group identifier not being associated with the  
4 apparatus identifier in the group membership file.

1       17. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the receiver  
2 is operative to receive a message including an identifier  
3 and a payload portion, and  
4               wherein the receiver controller is operative to  
5 compare said identifier to the apparatus identifier and the  
6 stored group identifier and discard said message in  
7 response to said identifier not matching one of said  
8 apparatus identifier and said group identifier.

1       18. A system host comprising:  
2               a memory for storing a group membership file  
3 including two or more group identifiers, a group identifier  
4 associated with two or more member identifiers;

5           a group generator operative to create a first  
6 group including two or more first group member identifiers  
7 that share a first criterion and associate a group  
8 identifier with the two or more first group membership  
9 identifiers in the group membership file; and  
10           a transmitter operative to transmit the group  
11 member file to a plurality of client devices, two or more  
12 of said client devices having client identifiers that match  
13 the first group member identifiers.

1       19. The system host of claim 18, further comprising:  
2           a transmission controller operative to transmit  
3 the group membership file to said plurality of client  
4 devices at scheduled intervals.

1       20. The system host of claim 19, wherein the group  
2 generator is operative to update the group membership file  
3 and transmit the updated group membership file to the  
4 plurality of client devices.

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1       21. A system comprising:  
2           a system host comprising:  
3                a memory for storing a group membership file  
4                including two or more group identifiers, each

5 group identifier associated with two or more  
6 member identifiers;

7 a group generator operative to create a  
8 first group including two or more first group  
9 member identifiers that share a first criterion  
10 and associate a first group identifier with the  
11 two or more first group membership identifiers in  
12 the group membership file; and

13 a transmitter operative to transmit the  
14 group member file; and  
15 a plurality of clients, a client comprising:

16 a memory operative to store an apparatus  
17 identifier;

18 a receiver operative to receive the group  
19 membership file in a first transmission; and

20 a receiver controller operative to store a  
21 group identifier in the memory in response to  
22 said apparatus identifier matching one of said  
23 member identifiers.

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1 22. The system of claim 21, wherein said  
2 communication link comprises a transmission line.

1           23. The system of claim 21, wherein said  
2 communication link comprises a wireless communication link.

1           24. The system of claim 21, wherein said client  
2 devices comprise set-top appliances adapted for connection  
3 to a television.

1        25. The system of claim 21, wherein said client devices  
2 comprise hand-held wireless communication devices.